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The Use of Museums For Educational Purposes Using Drama Method

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Abstract

Museums with rich artefacts inside them set the stage for understanding culture, art and history, therefore contribute for education. Instead of visiting like a spectator only, museums should be reviewed as locations to interact with items in display. Museums as being buildings rich in historical and cultural items where a community can display its past, culture and way of life, are new places that can be used for educational purposes in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The goal of our research project is to draw attention to the importance of teaching by using drama-methods in museums, to emphasize the effective and diverse use of museums for education. In our applied activities, we followed a methodology where personal observations, interviewing individuals and the review of documents were used. For this reason our study can be categorized as a factual study rather than a conceptual one. Within the framework of our study, in order to gather our data we used review- of-literature. In addition to this, our study was also based on the interviews made with people in activities. We also followed a keen observation of the performed activities and tried to make an accurate evaluation of them. We believe, the information gathered in our study and in our sample activities would especially be useful for the teachers. Greater importance should be attached to school-museum relationship. Greater education should be provided to the teachers about importance of the museums. We should make better use of our museums for educational purposes with more sample activities about their importance and there should be a greater support for museum-education. The teachers should go through an applied-education to learn and to understand the use of museums in education.

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1. Introduction

Today, one of the main problems observed in the field of education is the inability to create the relationship between the human life and activities, stages and materials which take part in the education period. This affects, therefore, the life-learning education process of students; narrows the ways of accessing and using the information; and prevents the active and effective use of their skills, talents and creativity. In short, the schools are not the only source of learning and knowledge where the prepared information given as education is an effective and interactive process. Different learning environments such as museums, parks, exhibitions and art galleries and salons may ensure the permanence of the education taken by conversion of the institutional knowledge given by schools into activities (Baykan, 2007).

The importance of museums in education is emphasized by many theorists in the emergence of the concepts of efficiency in education, gaining experience, environment, interaction and constructivism; because the museum environment represents the extrovert and ideal place that can contribute to mental, physical, emotional, educational and social development of students by enabling them to practice and to experience. Museums help students to understand that they are members of that society and form the basis of personality and self-confidence construction by introducing the documents related to the culture within social interaction. Museums particularly in multicultural societies play an important role in integrating various groups together (Tezcan, 2001).

32 museums and historical sites affiliated with Directorate of Department of Antiquities and Museums exist since 2012. Four of these are Museum of Archaeology; other four are Museum of Ethnography; five of them are National Struggle and Military Museum; seven of them are Icon Museum and Church; one is Museum of Fine Arts; six are historical sites; five are forts and monuments. In 1986, the week between 18-24 May is declared as Week of Museums in TRNC and each year various activities are carried out in this regard. Thus; the importance of museums is conveyed to the community through the media (Pilli, 2013).

2. Situation

Museums have been used in our education system as education tools since the old times. However, most of the time, museum visits have only been limited with a few quick glances onto the shelves. In particular, museums have been coded by the primary education students as boring places where many old and broken items are exhibited. Nevertheless, it is required to ensure that museums, the effective education tools that house so many prosperous materials are visited and experienced. Therefore; museum education has appeared with this aim.

Today, museum education has brought the issue to a level higher than arranging guided tours for schools and has created a wider bunch of activities including exhibitions, workshops and publications not only aimed at students but also at families and adults. As today's understanding of education do not highlight the result but the skills, the activities, the experience and the creative potential leading to the result; timing in museums gains importance and education activities must be exploratory and experiential (Atagok, 1999).

Museum education should be given by the people who are educated on the subject and the cooperation between museums and schools should be put in action more seriously. Therefore; the teachers are the main responsible characters of the process. Their knowledge about museum education should be broadened which will result in more efficiently and consciously use of museums in education. One of the learning methods is the creative drama. Creative drama which is one of the methods that makes students in a group work learn efficiently as well as giving students the chance to find their knowledge by revising their observations, experiences, feelings and lives; it provides learning by experimenting and experiencing (San, 1990). Museums are places that serve different life experiences for the students. In this case, the compatibility of these two fields in learning process cannot be denied. In learning with creative drama, the imaginary and fictional reflection skills of the student are both used at the same time and the alternative world created by acting with the objects (historical artefacts) used while teaching the topic may provide with many opportunities. The fact that the material aspect of the items is real may provide more attention focus than the attention towards the written world. In this way, the student can better grasp the characteristics of the era via the items, carry out detailed thinking about the events, evaluate the past with today's perspective by empathizing with people lived in that epoch, question the differences in people's perception of the world and evaluate the development of mankind in the historical process. The most important thing is to remove the

student from the passive listener status and ensure the student reaches the information by his/her own experiences, enhance the potential creativity and enable the formation of good sense and appreciation (Greenhill, 1991).

“The use of museums with drama method for education purposes” is the problematic sentence of the study.

3. Aim and importance of the study

Aim of the study is to present and discuss the importance and the benefits of effective and diverse use of museums in education. In addition, the relationship between school syllabi and samples of museum and environment studies; and the items and collections placed in there is formed to serve as a contribution to education.

In these studies, it is expected that the museum staff and the families in the family-participation oriented studies will be indirectly educated, affected and they will develop a positive attitude. It is also expected that the family-participation oriented museum studies will trigger the joy and curiosity of the students and motivate them. Awareness of democratic life as per age groups and contributing to awareness of differences in the activities where the respect towards different cultures will be highlighted may be counted as sub-objectives.

It is highly important to prepare museum education activities that will support learning and development fields instead of the museum visits made only as a part of the timetables in the syllabi. The information and samples of activities gathered in this study are considered to be significant in terms of guiding especially the primary education teachers who are the syllabus users.

The drama training candidates have speeded up the steps taken for the use of museums for education purposes within the drama training courses going on since June 2012 in TRNC about the study. Museum educations have been carried out in museums and historical sites such as Nicosia; Büyük Han (the Great Inn), Derviş Pasa Mansion, Kral Kızı Bilelle (Göçeri) (King's Daughter Bilelle), Dr. Fazıl Küçük Museum, Özel Etnografya Müzesi (Ethnographic Museum), Kyrenia; Karmi Village Square, Carob Barns ve Kıbrıs Evi (Cyprus House), Morphou; St. Mamas Monastery, Famagusta; Salamis Ancient City, Canbulat Museum, St. Barnabas Icon and Archaeological Museum and the drama method has been focused in the studies.

4. Target Audience

4th form students of Necati Taskin Primary School and families of drama trainers form the work group of the project. 22 students have contributed to the first application stage of the project and 14 voluntary adults have contributed to the second application stage of the project. Applied projects reflect a part of the work called “Use of museums for educational purposes with drama method”.

5. Application Example

The summary of drama application with families in Derviş Pasa Mansion is as below:

5.1 Preparation- Practice stage

A circle is formed outside of Derviş Pasa Mansion. The participants declare their opinions related to the outer view of the mansion and the identity of the mansion is determined. The family members choose a character to act before entering the mansion and enter the mansion while acting. Everyone in the playground says their name, one of their characteristics and their favourite dishes respectively and holds the hand of the next friend to speak.

5.2 Acting stage

Participants talk about games played in the garden of the mansion and game tools used. Everyone tries to turn the traditional Cypriot toys, ‘topaç and döndürek’*. The person that holds the toy says the name of his/her most

favourite traditional toy during their turn in the game. Examples of traditional games are given. Families are divided into three groups. They choose one of the traditional Cypriot games to play with the other groups. ‘Bezirgan başı’, ‘beş taş’ and ‘yağ satarım bal satarım’** are the games preferred.

Basket of toys: Family members form a circle in the garden. Everyone’s place is marked with a piece of chalk. The leader of the game gives each person a traditional Cypriot game name. For example, ‘lingiri, pirilli, beş taş’*, etc.. The leader takes a name too, gets into the circle and becomes it. Before starting the game it does not count as a good behaviour staying in the same place when the toy name is called, signalling and place changing of two people who have the same name and place changing into the next empty space; and these people who do this will be next it. It calls the name of toy he/she wants. For example; he/she says “pirilli”. All the pirillis in the circle change place. While all pirillis change place it tries to get into a place marked in the circle. One person will have to stay out because there will not be any more space in the middle. This person will be new it and stands in the middle of the circle. When he/she comes into the middle, he/she calls the name of one of these three toys. As well as the game can continue like this, it that comes into the middle can also call the name of two toy names at the same time or can call ‘basket of toys’ and may want everyone in the circle to change place.

5.2.2 Rooms, sounds and life

Participants move to the kitchen of the mansion and talk about the tools inside the room. Group gets divided into four different groups. Each group animates the image of the traditional Cypriot dish in the plate on the table only with body language and dull image technique. Other groups try to find out which dish it is.

The sounds of the tools are imitated in the weaving machine room. Participants imagine the weaving machine is working and they do rhythmic movements in harmony with the body language; at the same time they sound like the machine.

Each participant enters into the main room with an identity and gives a pose that will define his/her identity as if it is a part of a photograph and stands still. Comments about the identities are made for each of them.

Items prepared without the knowledge of each of participants is left at the entrance room. Poses that complete these items are given and they are introduced.

The most used words by the people live in this house at that time are written on papers and mixed in a basket. Participants get divided into groups and draw these papers in equal amounts. They act for a little amount of time using the words written on the drawn papers. Letters are written from today to this lived mansion in the past.

5.2.3 Revision and reflections

Views of participants about the activity period are noted and activity reflections are checked. Some of the opinions of participants during the applied activity: “This type of educational works is more effective, permanent and fun. It was an instructive period. We improved our self-knowledge and could easily express our-selves. The games played brought us to our childhood and we really had fun while playing games...”

Eventually the participants highlighted the necessity of building bridges between the schools and the students and the integration of museum items in education and life.

6. Result and suggestions

Use of places such as museums, art sites and culture houses for educational purposes should be the main aim of the schools. In that case, it can be emphasized that environments like museums that bring the old lives to our day should be used more effectively in the life-learning process of students. While arranging new and different methods to be benefited in the education processes, the outcomes of the methods applied in the past should be revised. It is necessary that the teachers should create practice examples by deeply understanding drama management and reflect these practices on their programs. Drama practices are considered to be activities that can be applied to all age groups. The circle affected may be expanded in case of museum education in which drama practices with methods and techniques suitable for all age groups starting from primary school is achieved.

Museum activities where drama methods with different contents are used should be converted into a part of the natural education process. Teachers should be educated about the museum education and drama before and during their service. School museums with different themes and contents should be created such as health museum, nutrition museum, toy museum. Scientific studies about the use of museums for educational purposes, the school museums, the museum educations in the world and in TRNC; and written and visual resources should be composed and generated.

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